



Ripley Court School

Child Protection Policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The safety and well being of all our pupils at Ripley Court School is our highest priority. Our business is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment, so that every pupil can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every pupil can develop his/her full potential and feel positive about him/herself as an individual. All pupils should care for and support each other.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

The NSPCC defines child abuse as:

“Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18.....Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse. Bullying and domestic violence are also forms of child abuse.

“A child may be experiencing abuse if he or she is:

- *Frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed*
- *Left in unsafe situations, or without medical attention*
- *Constantly “put down,” insulted, sworn at or humiliated*
- *Seems afraid of parents or carers*
- *Severely bruised or injured*
- *Displays sexual behaviour which doesn't seem appropriate for their age*
- *Growing up in a home where there is domestic violence*
- *Living with parents or carers involved in serious drug or alcohol abuse*

“Remember, this list does not cover every child abuse possibility. You may have seen other things in the child's behaviour in circumstances that worry you.

“Abuse is always wrong and it is never the young person's fault.”

SYMPTOMS

The NSPCC lists some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- repeated minor injuries
- children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or who appear underfed
- children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in school work, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- an air of 'detachment' or 'don't care' attitude
- overly compliant behaviour
- a 'watchful attitude'
- sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age), continual open masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- a child who is reluctant to go home, or is kept away from school for no apparent reason
- does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- 'tummy pains' with no medical reason

- eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting
- running away from home, suicide attempts
- self inflicted wounds
- reverting to younger behaviour
- depression, withdrawal
- relationships between child and adults which are secretive and exclude others
- pregnancy

These signs are not evidence themselves; but may be a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them or a pattern emerges. It is important to remember that there may be other explanations for a child showing such signs. Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts.

TRANSPARENCY

Ripley Court prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school. Copies of this policy, together with our other policies relating to issues of child protection are on our web site, and we hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the school. We will never ignore an allegation of child abuse and will always investigate any concerns thoroughly. Open communications are essential.

SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Ripley Court follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau before starting work. All Governors, volunteer helpers, contractors working regularly during term-time, such as contract catering staff, are also vetted. Our policies are reviewed by Governors annually. More detail is set out in our policy on Checking Employees, Temporary Workers, Governors, Proprietors, Volunteers and Contractors (which is on our web site).

RAISING AWARENESS

Rosie Wood is the Liaison Governor for Child Protection issues. The Governors formally consider child protection issues once a year, with day to day issues being delegated to the Child Protection Officers and the Headmaster and the Senior Management Team. That Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing the procedures for and the efficiency with which the child protection duties have been discharged.
- Ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
- Approving amendments to child protection arrangements in the light of changing Regulations or recommended best practice.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS

Darren Cockerill is our Child Protection Officer and Jo Rooke our Deputy Child Protection Officer. They have been fully trained for the demands of this role in child protection and inter-Agency working. (The Headmaster and Rosie Wood have also undergone training.) They regularly attend courses with other child support agencies to ensure that they remains conversant with best practice. They undergo refresher training every two years. They maintains close links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for Surrey and report at least once a year to the Governors on the child protection issues outlined above.

The school's records on child protection are kept locked in the headmaster's filing cabinet in the Headmaster's PA's office, and are separated from routine pupil records. Access is

restricted to the CPO or deputy CPO, the Headmaster or his PA or the liaison governor for child protection.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Every new member of staff, including part-timers, temporary, visiting and contract staff working in school, receives basic training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the Child Protection Officer or the Head Master/Mistress. Child protection training is also given to new Governors and volunteers. Everyone attends refresher training at least every three years. Training in child protection is an important part of the induction process. More detail is set out in our policy on Induction of New Staff, Governors and Volunteers in Child Protection

INTERACTION WITH PUPILS: MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

New members of staff, Governors and volunteers are given copies of the school's policy on Interaction with Pupils: Model Code of Conduct for Staff. Discussion of the procedures set out in that document forms a vital part of our induction procedures. The model code of conduct provides guidance for teachers and other members of staff when faced with handling any issue relating to child abuse. It is not intended to be a substitute for proper training.

The Child Protection Officer, who has received specialist training in this topic, should always be informed if a member of staff has any concerns.

The code is placed on the agenda of a staff meeting once a year, so that it can be reviewed and updated by the staff themselves, before being sent to Governors for approval.

RAISING AWARENESS WITH PUPILS

Ripley Court prides itself on its culture of open and effective communication between staff and pupils, and on its excellent pastoral support structures. We prepare all of our pupils to make reasoned, informed choices, judgments and decisions. Time is allocated in PSHE time for discussion of child abuse and in developing in pupils the confidence which they require to recognise abuse and to stay safe.

All pupils know that there are adults to whom they can turn to if they are worried, including all teachers, the Headmaster and Matrons. All pupils are day pupils living at home. In particular, all pupils have access to a telephone helpline in the dining room foyer, enabling them to call for support in private.

PROMOTION OF WELFARE

The ethos of Ripley Court school is to promote social and moral well-being, to teach pupils to take care of and to value themselves, and to think in terms of making a positive contribution to society as adults. All our pupils take part in a large number of charitable activities. Many of our older pupils are involved in helping pupils from [our local primary schools with reading etc]. We see this as making an important contribution towards the development of the whole person, who grows up to value society and to expect to make a personal contribution towards the general.

EQUAL TREATMENT

Ripley Court School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

We aim to create a friendly, caring and perceptive environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each student.

BULLYING

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

COMPLAINTS

We hope that children or parents do not have any complaints about our school; but copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request. A summary is available in the parents handbook.